

What a pity that the author of the *Periplus* has not given us his name, and told us something definite about him!

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#### PROPOSED IDENTIFICATION OF TWO SOUTH-INDIAN PLACE-NAMES IN THE PERIPLUS

Among the few foreign records of ancient India one of the most trustworthy, so far as its limited scope admits, is the *Periplus Maris Erythræi* (written in the second half of the first Christian century), which gives us an exact account of the commercial ports of the western coast from the mouths of the Indus to Cape Comorin, and of the articles entering into the trade of each. Of the eastern coast little is said, and that little is hearsay picked up at some of the western ports; but even that is not without present value. Many of the place-names in the *Periplus* are readily identified, while others have been disputed by the commentators and have appeared and then disappeared from the classical geographies. Two of these, if the following identifications be correct, will add to the understanding which the *Periplus* has given us of Southern India in that period.

Muziris and Nelcynda, the southern trading ports frequented by Greek and Arab shipping, were first identified as Mangalore and Nilēshwar, both in South Kanara; but their true location was shown by Gundert, Burnell, Caldwell, and Yule, to be much farther south, Muziris being identical with Muyirikkōṭṭa or Cranganore, in Cochin. *Nelcynda* seems rather to have been an appellation; Pliny speaks of the "city of the *Neacyndi*", Ptolemy of *Melkynda*, which Caldwell translated "Western Kynda". Laying down the sailing course described in the *Periplus* between Muziris and Nelcynda, and setting out from Cranganore, we should reach the modern

Kōṭṭayam, in Travancore, an early trade centre, located on a broad bay of the Cochin backwaters, and at the western terminus of several trade routes through the Pirmēḍ hills.

The text (§§ 54-5) describing the course south of Nelcynda says it was "situated on a river, about 120 stadia from the sea; there is another place at the mouth of this river, the village of *Bacarē*, to which ships drop down on the outward voyage from Nelcynda, and anchor in the roadstead to take on their cargoes, because the river is full of shoals and the channels are not clear."<sup>1</sup> This place appears also in Ptolemy, with but one letter inserted, as *Barkarē*.

It is submitted that *Bakarḥ* or *Barakarḥ* is identical with Porakāḍ, in Travancore, on the coast (9° 22' N., 76° 22' E.), for which it is a close transliteration; while the distance from Kōṭṭayam is practically in exact accord with the text. Porakāḍ was once a notable port. The Portuguese, and subsequently the Dutch, had settlements there. Varthema, in 1503, spoke of it as *Porcai*, and Tavernier in 1648 as *Porca*. The remains of a Portuguese fort are still visible there at low water, although nearly submerged by encroachment of the sea. By dredging a better passage between backwater and ocean, and constructing harbour works, Alleppey, about ten miles to the north, has now taken the place which Porakāḍ formerly held in trade.<sup>2</sup> Porakāḍ is, likewise, at the mouth of a river, the Achenkōil, which rises in the Ghauts near the Shenkōṭṭa Pass, the main highway between Travancore and Tinnevely.

Passing down the coast, the text speaks of the *Dark*

<sup>1</sup> Κεῖται δὲ καὶ αὐτὴ παρὰ ποταμὸν ὥσει ἀπὸ σταδίων ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι τῆς θαλάσσης. 'Ετέρα δὲ κατ' αὐτὸ τὸ στόμα τοῦ ποταμοῦ πρόκειται κώμη Βακαρῆ, εἰς ἣν ἀπὸ Νελκύνδων ἐπὶ τῆς ἀναγωγῆς προκαταβαίνει τὰ πλοῖα καὶ ἐπὶ σάλου διορμίζεται πρὸς ἀνάληψιν τῶν φορτίων διὰ δὴ τὸν ποταμὸν ἔρματα καὶ διάπλους ἔχειν οὐκ ἐλαφροῦς.

<sup>2</sup> *Imperial Gazetteer of India.*

*Red Mountain* (τὸ λεγόμενον Πυρρόν ὄρος), evidently the Red Bluffs at Varkkallai, in Travancore, on the coast, and of a port *Balita*; which may perhaps be identified with Varkkallai (8° 42' N.), formerly the southern terminus of the Cochin backwaters, which have now been extended, by cutting a canal through these same Red Bluffs, as far as Trivandrum, the modern trade centre for that district. The form *Βαλίτα*, if not corrupt, is short by both an *r* and a guttural from the modern Varkkallai.

Proceeding beyond Cape Comorin, the older classical geographers placed a gulf which they called *Sinus Argariticus*, and a port called *Argaru*. Both have now disappeared from the maps. They were based on a misunderstanding of the following passage in the *Periplus* (§ 59): "Beyond Colchi there follows another district called the Coast Country, which lies on a bay, and has a region inland called Argaru. At this place, and nowhere else, are bought the pearls gathered on the coast thereabouts; and from there are exported muslins, those called Argaritic."<sup>1</sup>

The Coast Country of the *Periplus* (Αἰγιαλός) seems to be no other than the Chōla Coast, still called Chōla-māṇḍalam, which the Portuguese made into Coromandel; the Chōla kingdom, in short, the richest, largest, and most prosperous of the three Dravidian states, as the *Periplus* asserts. And this leads to its capital, placed by the old geographers on the coast (although the text speaks of it as lying inland), and called Ἀργάρου.

It is submitted that this Ἀργάρου is identical with Uraiṃyūr, Oraiṃyūr, Warriore, the ancient capital of the Chōla kingdom, now part of Trichinopoly. The "fine muslins known as Argaritic" do but confirm the

<sup>1</sup> Μετὰ δὲ Κόλχους ἐκδέχεται τόπος ἕτερος Αἰγιαλὸς λεγόμενος ἐν κόλπῳ κείμενος, ἔχων χώραν μεσόγειον, λεγομένην Ἀργάρον. ἐν ἐνὶ τούτῳ τῷ τόπῳ ὠνεῖται τὸ παρ' αὐτὴν τὴν ἡπειρον συλλεγόμενον πιρικόν. Φέρονται καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς σινδόνες αἱ Ἀργαρίτιδες λεγόμεναι.

well-known fact of the early supremacy of the Chōla people in textile manufacture. Some of the finest fabrics that reached the Roman world were of Chōla origin, and thence also came the fine gold-threaded embroideries brought westward by the Saracen merchants.

If Uraiyr and Ἀργάρον be identical, the Greek transliteration becomes a matter of interest. Some commentators have unnecessarily assumed the name *Argaru* to be very corrupt. Perhaps the Greek form as originally written may have been Ἀράγουν or Ἀραίγουν, involving but a slight re-arrangement of the form given in the text.<sup>1</sup>

These identifications carry back to the first century of the Christian era two trade centres which were important throughout the Middle Ages, and must by their location have become important in an earlier age, whenever that part of India became politically organized—Porcai the port and Trichinopoly the city of industry. Incidentally they indicate the accuracy of the author of the *Periplus* as to a district concerning which his knowledge has not heretofore been generally allowed.

WILFRED H. SCHOFF.

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July, 1912.

### IS THE RAMAYANA OF TULASI DASA A TRANSLATION ?

A committee of six paṇḍits<sup>2</sup> has issued a curious edition of the Āraṇya and Sundara Kāṇḍas of the *Rāma-carita-mānasa* of Tulasī Dāsa. The interesting point about it

<sup>1</sup> [And it may be suggested that at some time or another, through the use of cursive forms, a *υ* has been mistaken for, and turned into, a *γ*, perhaps by some early copyist.—ED.]

<sup>2</sup> P. Sēvārāmaji, P. Rāmabhadraśaraṇaji, P. Rāmanārāyaṇa, P. Cintāmaṇi Vaidyaratna, P. Baijnāth Dubē, and P. Balabhadraprasāda Śukla. The work can be obtained from the last-named gentleman, who is Assistant Master at the Government High School, Ballia, U.P. The price of the Āraṇya Kāṇḍa is eight annas ; that of the Sundara Kāṇḍa is not stated.